

*Discuss border security and trade with U.S and Mexican officials*

WASHINGTON--Wednesday, U.S. Reps. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-Texas) and Harry Teague (D-New Mexico) hosted Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano and her Mexican Counterpart, Secretary of Government, Fernando Gomez Mont, on Capitol Hill for a roundtable discussion on border security and trade.

The meeting focused on the recent rise in border violence, border communications, as well as the supplemental funding request for border security led by Teague last month.

"Today's meeting with Secretary Napolitano and Secretary Gomez Mont is a reflection of our deep collaboration in the unending struggle against the violent drug cartels that threaten our society along the U.S.-Mexico border," Ortiz. "During the meeting, Congressman Teague and I emphasized to Secretary Napolitano the importance of working with our Mexican counterparts to ensure we assist our neighboring country."

"Stemming the recent jump in violence in Mexico is essential to securing our country's borders and keeping our constituents safe. There is no simple solution to these dangers, but the only way to begin to address them is through cooperation and collaboration," said Harry Teague, Vice Chair of the Congressional Border Caucus. "I want to thank Secretary Napolitano and Secretary Gomez Mont for meeting today and I look forward to working with both of them as we address this critical issue."

The Mexican Government, the Department of Homeland Security, Teague and Ortiz worked closely to convene the meeting in Washington. In addition to border security, the secretaries and Members of Congress also spoke about new methods in place to spur trade between the neighboring countries.

"Another important topic that we spoke about is the on-going efforts to maximize trade with both countries. Trade along the U.S.-Mexico border is one of the most important aspects of our bilateral relationship. I believe our cultivated relationship between our two countries is the most important in the world," Ortiz said.

“As our economy continues to grow and recover, now is the time to explore and emphasize trade options available to us. Building on our current trade relationship with Mexico, we must take this opportunity to utilize our shared border to benefit both countries,” Teague said.

The group was joined by the Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection, Alan Bersin, Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, John Morton, Mexican Ambassador to the United States, Arturo Sarukhan, Mexican Deputy Secretary for Immigration and Religious Affairs, Alejandro Poire, and Mexican Head of National Security, Guillermo Valdes.

“In closing our meeting with Secretaries Napolitano and Gomez Mont, we all agreed to be in close contact during this time as we plan ahead for the future of both countries while keeping in mind our goal of capitalizing on trade,” Ortiz said. “I will continue to work diligently with Secretary Napolitano and her team to ensure that we secure the border and protect our indispensable trade relationship.”

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